Entry 4: Documented Accomplishments:

Contributions to student learning

**Each Description and Analysis must clearly and specifically describe why each accomplishment is significant in your teaching context and what impact each has had on student learning**

Accomplishment #1: Participation in the 2009-2010 Chicago All-City Band Assessment

***What is the nature of this accomplishment?* Be very specific. Remember that the assessor**

**will know nothing about you or your teaching context.**

My first accomplishment is the participation of my high school concert band at the 2010 city-wide music performance festival. The focus of the music performance festivals is on the performance and assessment of high school bands performing a varied array of band repertoire chosen by the directors. The focus is on best practices of the instructor and musicians to bring out the optimum musical performance for students.

The festivals provide opportunities for solo performers, small ensembles and large performing organizations to exhibit the highest level of adjudicated performance through the selection and presentation of quality music literature. The festival format allows students and teachers to hear other performers while competing against a standard of excellence instead of each other; as represented by the performance rubrics developed for each event. (Artifact 1) The assessment is broken up into two parts, music performance of three musical arrangements prepared prior to the assessment, and sight reading of one band arrangement. The requirements of the prepared band arrangements are a march, a grade 3 or higher arrangement, and a slow ballad. The adjudicators submit a rubric assessment on paper of each piece performed, as well as an audio tape of commentary assessment during the actual performance of each piece.

***Why is this accomplishment significant?* To be significant, the accomplishment must be an**

**important effort or achievement that demonstrates your work as a partner with students’**

**families and their community; as a learner; and as a collaborator and/or leader with**

**colleagues or other professionals.**

This accomplishment is significant because students have a chance to get valuable and specific feedback on their own music performance and the music performance of the entire ensemble from experienced adjudicators that span the ranks of professional musicians to university professors to veteran music educators. It is also significant because students get the opportunity to listen to many other high school bands participating in the event. This accomplishment is significant to my specific school because it is the first time my high school has participated in this event since the 1970’s. This valuable educational experience was not given to my students until I became their music teacher.

**As a partner with student’s families** this accomplishment is significant because parents of band members attended the event and got the opportunity to see their child perform and hear other high school bands, experiencing the performance and assessment process along with their child. This accomplishment is significant as a **learner** because I am given valuable feedback on the specific arrangements my band performed and rehearsed by the adjudicators. I was then able to review and reflect on that feedback along with my students and apply it directly to my classes, future performances, and music program. My students watched their performance on videotape, and then listened to the adjudicators comments on audio tape during their performance in the background, getting a second by second evaluation of their performance. My band then had a discussion on the adjudicator’s evaluations, their own evaluations of themselves as individuals and the band as a whole, and wrote written reflections. These written reflections were in collaboration with the English department using best practices in writing and were graded by these guidelines.

This accomplishment is significant as a **collaborator and leader** with colleagues and professionals because in preparation for this event I am in contact with other high school band directors about rehearsal strategies, musical selection, the adjudication process, and overall preparation of my ensemble. In the months leading up to the assessment I was in contact with multiple band directors with whom I perform with in a community band on a weekly basis. We discussed types of programming, literature grade and quality, and what would best fit our perspective bands. Advice about playing the strengths of your ensemble through programming, I am also collaborating with the adjudicators by participating in this event and gaining their knowledge, insight, and advice on improving my band program and teaching techniques.

This accomplishment has had a direct impact on student learning through the rehearsal and preparation process, the actual performance at the event site, and the reflection process afterwards in class. The adjudicator’s notes and audio recordings were reviewed after the assessment took place; strategies suggested were applied directly to the pieces performed and new music given out for the next concert series. One suggestion to develop tone an adjudicator gave was playing long tones in 4, 8, 12, 16, and 32 beat progressions focusing on breathing and sound production. Incorporating crescendos and decrescendos using this same format focusing on ensemble balance and dynamic control also improved my ensemble significantly in the weeks and months after the assessment and is now a daily part of my warm up routine.

**Accomplishment #2: Family and Community Involvement Chair/Lead**

***What is the nature of this accomplishment?* Be very specific. Remember that the assessor**

**will know nothing about you or your teaching context.**

I have been the chairperson and leader of the family and community involvement team for the past year and a half at my high school. One of the first goals of the family and community involvement team were to get parents involved with the school, so the team started a monthly meeting designed to inform parents of school events, activities, academic progress, and how to get more parents involved at the school and in their child’s academic life. These monthly meetings gave interested parents a forum to discuss and give their input to promote the success of their children and the student body. I setup the meeting times, meeting place, communicated to parents via phone calls, email, and used my band concerts as a publicity venue to invite parents. (Artifact 2: concert program cover) After the meetings I gathered this information and communicated it with the faculty in biweekly faculty meetings where we planned to implement some of the things the parents suggested, and brainstormed ways of improving parental contact and involvement. An example of this is an office space created for parents to come and volunteer at the school assisting in parental contact concerning grades, attendance, and behavior for a few hours per week. This was implemented at the start of this year. (Artifact 3:parent volunteer confirmation letter) The family and community involvement team is part of a larger organization known as the P.A.R.R. committee. P.A.R.R. is an acronym that stands for (Productive, Appropriate, Respectful, Responsible) It is a program implemented in partnership with a local university and focuses on positive behavioral intervention and supports (P.B.I.S.) “PBIS is a framework or approach for assisting school personnel in adopting and organizing evidence-based behavioral interventions into an integrated continuum that enhances academic and social behavior outcomes for all students.” (pbis.org) the mission of the family and community involvement team is to involve parents with their child’s academic life so they can be successful, involve parents and community in school activities, academics, and events, and create partnerships to work on school improvement priorities. My strong belief in parents being involved with their child’s academic life, progress, and success combined with my extensive experience in working with band parents and boosters from my previous high school led me to the leadership position of the family and community involvement team at my school.

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**families and their community; as a learner; and as a collaborator and/or leader with**

**colleagues or other professionals.**

This accomplishment is significant as a **partner with student’s families and community** because the teams sole purpose and mission is to involve families and the community with the high school. These partnerships include parent’s involvement in school events, communication, attendance, chaperoning, fundraising, school wide decision-making, and improving other parent’s involvement in their child’s academic progress. An example of this is a mother that was having trouble with her daughter’s attendance to class, tardiness, and slipping grades. She came to one of the meetings where we were discussing electronic monitoring of students academic progress and attendance through a software program called parent portal. (Artifact 4: Meeting agenda: parent portal) One of the things the mother was ecstatic about was an option discussed in the program that if checked off allowed for a text message to be sent immediately to the mothers cell phone if her daughter was marked absent or tardy during school, or grade dropped below a percentage set by the parent. The daughter was a trombone player in my beginning band and was not happy that I told her mother about this new way of monitoring her school progress and attendance as she was regularly cutting class. After her mother was registered with the parent portal system due to the parent meetings I organized, administrated, held a leadership role in, and connected back to the faculty, she was able to keep closer track of her daughter and help her improve on attendance and keep her grades up and has improved greatly over the past year. (Artifact5: mother’s confirmation) This specific success has driven one of the main goals of the team this current year of focusing on substantially increasing the number of parents on the online parent portal software system. (Artifact 6: Team goals/agenda 2010-2011) This year I have set up meeting times and dates where computer labs and staff are available for parents to come in and be guided through the process of signing up for this electronic monitoring system. (Artifact 7: Parent portal parent signup sheet)

This accomplishment is significant as a **learner** because involvement with parents and community directly impacts my teaching and thus student learning. Having a working relationship and more information about the background of my student’s families and the community are crucial to aiding in my ability to teach. In the weekly P.A.R.R. meetings all the chairs of each team gathered to collaborate with each other and go over action plans and school goals. My team was focused on parents and community and I was able to discuss our progress, objectives, and goals to the other teams. As a learner, I was able to listen and discuss with the other five teams, there objectives, progress, and goals covering large facets of the schools improvement, plans, academic and behavioral data and progress. (Artifact 8: PARR Agenda) Identifying the culture of the students and their families at school has better prepared me for the challenges of differentiating my instruction. Having important information like socio-economic status, language, religious affiliation, family structure, home-life, and parental support which I have gained through leading this team has contributed greatly to my learning as a teacher and directly impacts the way I instruct my students.

This accomplishment is significant as a **collaborator and leader** with colleagues because I am the leader of the team, and the team consists of a group of teachers at our school that chose to be involved in improving the connection with families and the community to our school. The teams were created a year and a half ago in conjunction with the P.A.R.R. program to meet school improvement schools to get off academic probation and create a safe, positive, and superior learning environment for all students. When they created the teams I volunteered and became leader and chairperson of the family and community involvement team at its inception.

***How has what you have described had an impact on students’ learning?* You need to**

**connect your accomplishment to the learning of your students or the students of your**

**colleagues. Where appropriate, cite specific examples.**

This accomplishment has had a direct impact on student learning due to one of the main objectives of the family and community involvement team this current year at our school of signing up parents for the parent portal, an online website that lets parents monitor their students’ academic progress and attendance from any computer at any time. By parents monitoring their child’s attendance and academic progress, students stay on track and attend class, finish their homework and required assignments, and are accountable for their academic progress due to parental awareness and involvement. (Artifact 9: school wide data/parent portal data) – *this data cannot directly connect increase in parent signups with increase in attendance/grades, although both have increased in the past year)*

**Accomplishment #3: Superior rating in sight-reading at the Florida Bandmasters performance assessment**

***What is the nature of this accomplishment?* Be very specific. Remember that the assessor**

**will know nothing about you or your teaching context.**

The nature of this accomplishment is instructing, preparing, administrating, communicating, collaborating, and working with parents to participate and perform at a Band Masters performance assessment in another state achieving the highest ranking in sight reading due to high level instruction and student musicianship. There are multiple reasons for participation in this educational event.

“First, to provide opportunities for students and directors to perform in an environment which provides critical evaluation of its performance by noted experts in the field of band performance. Second, to provide the opportunity for students and directors to perform for their peers in a formal concert setting. Third, to provide a performance opportunity which will serve as a motivational goal for students and directors. Fourth, to provide an opportunity for students and directors to hear performances of their peers and learn from hearing those performances, and to provide a goal which is so compelling that the preparation for attaining that goal becomes the vehicle for continued growth and to demonstrate students' abilities to apply musical fundamentals and concepts in an ensemble performance setting.”

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**Important effort or achievement that demonstrates your work as a partner with students’**

**Families and their community; as a learner; and as a collaborator and/or leader with**

**Colleagues or other professionals.**

This accomplishment is significant because it is the first time my high school has ever scored a superior rating in the sight reading portion of the educational assessment. It also was significant because there is a direct correlation between professional development, instruction, and student learning.

This accomplishment is significant as a **partner with student’s families and communities** because parents were heavily involved in supporting and implementing the necessary steps for this educational opportunity to take place. Band parents played a pivotal role in helping run the band program. A band parent booster organization was created to assist in many duties required to run a successful band program from fundraising to pay for transportation, instruments, uniforms, and supplies, to chaperoning, ushering, transporting equipment, and setting up recreational events for the band. I partnered with parents not only to help in logistical or financial matters, but also so the parents would experience firsthand their child’s music education. The assessment event was a unique opportunity for parents in that normally they attend concerts where they observe only the end product of student learning and not the active process of instruction and assessment. At the event they listened and read judges comments in the performance and sight reading rooms gaining a professional perspective on the assessment and instructional process.(Artifact 9:adjudicator assessment rubric) *– this does not link parental involvement but proves the band was there? Maybe use this elsewhere?*

This accomplishment is significant as a **learner** because through professional development and application of strategies learned at a music education state conference, (Artifact 10: sight read it! Handout); I was able to instruct my ensemble to a high performance level in the area of sight reading music. From this experience I was successful in directly correlating professional development to classroom instruction through strategies gained and applied in sight reading from professional development at the conference I attended.

This accomplishment is significant as a **collaborator** with colleagues and other professionals because I am directly collaborating with the adjudicators which are professionals in the field of music education during the assessment process. In preparation for this event I contacted other high school band directors that participated in the event about rehearsal strategies, musical selection, the adjudication process, and overall preparation of my ensemble. Specifically in one instance I had a question about taking a passage more rubato then the set tempo and one of my colleagues told me as long as I wrote it in the scores for the judges and it made musical sense to sustain or pick up the tempo to increase musical tension or release that it would be allowed. Previously as a young director I always adhered strictly to the musical directions the composer wrote and did not think it was in my power to over step those bounds. As I grow as a music educator and band director I have learned that adding your interpretation to the music can add emotion and uniqueness to the performance. Having your students make musical choices while performing that might not be written on the page is also crucial to the music learning and exploration process.

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This accomplishment impacted my students learning through the participation in the assessment process, adjudicator comments, both written and audio recordings, and the reflection. After completion of the assessment the students reviewed the assessment materials in class, wrote reflections based on the adjudicators comments, the video recording of their performance, and their overall experience. Students observed specific educational strategies that were highly effective and found value in those tools aiding them in their learning and performance skills.

Accomplishment #4: Professional Musical Performance and Partnerships

***What is the nature of this accomplishment?* Be very specific. Remember that the assessor**

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“The accomplished music teacher is, first and foremost, an accomplished musician.” (nbpts.org) the nature of this accomplishment is my collaboration, musical performance, and partnership in multiple ensembles and community bands over the past four years of my teaching career. Being involved in these community musical organizations has created a vast network of musicians that have helped me grow as a musician, conductor, and teacher. I discussed the daily trials and tribulations, successes and failures, of my program constantly striving towards improving my teaching and my student’s comprehension. I have invited these musical groups and individuals to my school to observe my classes and perform in joint community/school concerts. (Artifact 11: lphs concert programs) I exposed my students to people of all ages that have continued their music learning process beyond high school and into old age giving examples of life-long learners and the value of continuing their music education after graduating high school.

I instruct my students that there is no difference between an athlete and a musician. Both must train and practice on a consistent basis. While athletes might build muscles in their arms and legs, wind players build muscles in their fingers, lips, and facial muscles, percussionists in their hands, feet, arms, and legs. Performing and practicing on a regular basis is crucial to maintaining these strengths. Modeling on my instrument is one of the most powerful instructional strategies I have used to increase student learning and comprehension. Daily professional development of my musical skills has been an extremely important factor in my maximum effectiveness as a music instructor. Past professional experience includes the following and many more:

* Lane Tech Community Band, Chicago, IL, 2009-Present
* Chicago Chorale Winds, Chicago, IL, 2008-Present
* Who Needs Dave Jazz Ensemble, Chicago, IL, 2009-Present
* Old Town School of Folk Music, Latin Jam, Chicago, IL, 2010-Present
* WND Latin Band, Chicago, IL, 2010-Present
* Lakeview Jazz Ensemble, Chicago, IL, 2009-2010
* Lakeview Rock Ensemble, Chicago, IL, 2009-2010
* Pagowa, Musky Music Festival, Chicago, IL, 2009-2010
* Heartland Symphony Orchestra, Avon Park, FL, 2007-2008
* Highlands County Concert Band, Sebring, FL, 2006-2008
* United Methodist Wind Ensemble, Sebring, FL, 2007-2008
* Pirates of Penzance, Little Highlands theatre, Sebring, FL, 2007
* Brass Menagerie Brass Quintet, Sebring, FL, french horn and trumpet, 2007-2008
* University Community Orchestra, principal trumpet, Milwaukee, WI, 2006
* Chamber Orchestra, University Choir, UW-Milwaukee, WI, 2006
* Suessical, trumpet soloist, Milwaukee, WI, 2006
* Cardinal Stritch University Musical, Milwaukee, WI, 2006
* A Jacques Brel Revue Musical, trumpet soloist, Milwaukee, WI, 2006
* University of Wisconsin Concert Chorale Chorus, UW-Milwaukee, WI, 2005
* “Music From Almost Yesterday” Concerts, UW-Milwaukee, WI, 2004-2005
* Latin Heat, Lake Placid, FL, 2008
* Red, White, and Blues Band, Sunset Blues Festival, Sebring, FL, 2007
* G.I. Joe Jazz Band, Sebring, FL, 2006-2008
* Highland Airs Big Band, Sebring Civic Center, Sebring, FL, 2007
* Pagowa, Music festivals, Milwaukee-Chicago, WI, 2007-2010
* Jon Wade Jazz Ensemble, The Mosaic, Milwaukee, WI, 2005-2008
* Open jam sessions at various venues in the Milwaukee area, WI, 2005-2008

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**families and their community; as a learner; and as a collaborator and/or leader with**

**colleagues or other professionals.**

**As a partner with students families and communities:**

This accomplishment is significant as a partner with student’s families and community because many of the ensembles comprise of members of the communities in which I have taught. Many include current students, parents, community leaders, teachers, graduated students, amateur and professional musicians. In one of the many ensembles I performed in was a brass quintet where I played french horn. One of the other members was a parent from another high school in the same district that I taught at. Before and after rehearsal every week we would discuss progress and events happening at our perspective schools. He would tell me about his daughter’s experiences in her schools ensembles as well as the band director’s teaching strategies, musical programming, and relationships with parents. I would in turn tell him my perspectives on issues in my program I was dealing with. Specifically an issue came up concerning student behavior due to the band director that was newly hired. Many students in the band had loyalty for the past director and did not like the new director’s approaches and way of doing things in the classroom. The students would then come home and tell their parents who began to build a sour opinion of the director and what were going on in class. Being a newly hired director myself I was experiencing the same issues. I told him ways I was dealing with replacing a loved band director. I informed him that the transition between band directors can be extremely difficult as students build close relationships with their music teachers and those bonds can be difficult to let go of after a band director moves on and another takes his/her place. I let him know at my school I communicated to the students and parents clearly my objectives, rules, planning process, and expectations. I constructed a band constitution so students and parents had a structured guide to the program on paper that clearly stated objectives and goals and detailed steps that would be followed in case issues would arise. Artifact 12:band constitution handout) I told him building relationships with students takes time and not all will be open to a new way of doing things in the classroom, especially if they think they would be betraying their old director by accepting the new one. I felt that slowly building relationships and giving students time to adjust by building on successes in the ensemble was key to the transition period. Overall, this back and forth weekly conversation shed light on the parent’s perspective in dealing with band programs and how to effectively communicate and improve my program, student, and parent relationships.

**As a learner:**

This accomplishment is significant as a learner because I am constantly learning by applying my skills as a musician, collaborating with other musicians on a daily basis, and networking with other professionals. Every rehearsal I am constantly honing my performing and listening skills, improving skills on secondary instruments, and learning new music never performed before. Often I would choose not to play my primary instrument the trumpet, but rather other brass, woodwind, or percussion instruments so I would gain skills I could use in the classroom for my students. Given the opportunity to play secondary instruments in an ensemble was crucial to my personal music education because the fundamental classes for each instrument I attended in college did not adequately prepare me to model the appropriate techniques on the various instruments my students might be playing. I used my community bands as a vehicle to increase these instrumental skills I was lacking through performance, while getting advice from other players on the most effective ways to practice those instruments that were secondary to the trumpet.

**As a collaborator and/or leader with colleagues or other professionals:**

This accomplishment is significant as a collaborator and leader with colleagues and other professionals because in many of these ensembles I hold a leadership or principal position. Performing in musical ensembles requires constant collaboration in an effort to create a deep musical experience for both the musicians and the audience. This accomplishment is also significant as a collaborator with colleagues and other professionals because many of these ensembles membership comprise of other music directors, teachers, professional, and amateur musicians. By being involved in these activities I create a network of musicians that I can use as mentors for advice on instruction, musicianship, administration, career goals, and performance opportunities for my students outside of the classroom and into the community. Specifically, my students had an upcoming bandmaster’s performance assessment, so in preparation I asked the conductor of one of my community bands to come to my school and act as an adjudicator and assess the bands performance. This conductor was a retired band director of over 30 years, trumpet player, veteran music educator, and personally a close friend and mentor. My band setup on our school stage and performed a program of three pieces, and sight read one piece in the exact sequence of events that would occur at the bandmaster’s assessment. He made audio comments, filled out the assessment rubric identical to the one at the future assessment, and gave comments after the program was complete. He also stepped up on the podium to work with the band on a few strategies and details that might improve the performance. Overall this experience was constructive to my students learning due to my collaboration with other professionals through performing in community ensembles as a musician.

***How has what you have described had an impact on students’ learning?* You need to**

**connect your accomplishment to the learning of your students or the students of your**

**colleagues. Where appropriate, cite specific examples.**

My accomplishment as a professional musician has had a huge impact on my students learning. In this current year I site the specific example of my performance in a community band I have been a member of the last two years after taking the current music teaching position I hold. This ensemble consists of local band directors, teachers, and advanced high school students. Recently the community band performed at another high schools annual winter concert, and a few weeks after performed at my high school concert as a special guest ensemble. (Artifact 13: Winter concert program 2010) My students wrote reflections of the concert as a whole, and many talked about the community band that I performed in. The balance, blend, and intonation of the band were some of the things they commented on, and gained insight upon. (Artifact 14: Student work: reflection winter concert 2010: ***add any specific comments from the reflection chosen***) Many of my students had never seen or heard a band concert other than my high schools ensembles. They were exposed to adults of many different career paths continuing their music education due to the joy of music making promoting life-long learning. Hearing an advanced ensemble gave my students a look at what their future in band might look like, and something to strive for.

Life-long learning is a staple of my instructional strategy. It is extremely valuable for my students to see adults of all ages playing their instruments as a recreational activity and shows others take immense value in continuing their music education over the course of a lifetime. I constantly involve my students in my musical performance career inviting them to jam sessions and band rehearsals so they see firsthand the variety of musical opportunities that are available in their area. I have invited past professional ensembles to my concerts to perform, and have had professional musicians and veteran music educators assess my individual students and music program to ensure the highest quality of instruction and performance possible.